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An Opportunity Neglected

THERE is a danger that German prisoners of war in this country may return to Germany the most ardent and effective Nazis of them all. There are over 130,000 German prisoners here now and the number will doubtless be greatly increased in the next few months. To send them back to Germany better fed and in better physical and nervous health than most of their countrymen but unchanged in their minds—with perhaps less openness of mind than other Germans because they will have been spared the most shattering experiences of the last stage of the war—would be a colossal blunder.

At present there is no serious effort to re-educate these Germans. They are allowed to spread within the prison camps their own Nazi philosophy but they are not exposed to a constructive interpretation of life in democratic terms. They are allowed to have some books about American history and culture if they desire them and to read American magazines but there is no systematic effort to provide literature or instruction on social issues which are necessarily controversial. What is even more serious, in some cases the anti-Nazis among the Germans have been segregated for their own protection and the fanatical Nazis have been left in a position to influence the majority who are not now convinced Nazis.

There is no authoritative estimate of the division of opinion among the prisoners which is entirely accurate but some reliable investigators are of the opinion that about twenty-five per cent are Nazis, about fifteen per cent anti-Nazis and the rest confused souls who could be influenced either way. The assumption that the majority of prisoners are either anti-Nazi or confused is confirmed by estimates concerning their religious affiliations. In one camp the Protestant chaplain reports that fifty-three per cent of the prisoners claim to be Protestant and forty-two per cent Catholic. In another camp the estimate is forty-four per cent Protestant and forty-four per cent Catholic. Such estimates as these, even if they are much discounted, suggest that the vast majority of prisoners have not consciously abandoned all connection with Christianity and with their own cultural past. There should be more hope for confused and wavering souls who combine some

Christian beliefs and loyalties with Nazi ideas than for those who have broken completely with their Christian heritage.

The reason that so little has been done to re-educate German prisoners is that the Geneva Convention of 1929, of which we are a signatory and to which we owe one of the few remnants of humane conduct that has survived in this war, forbids the indoctrination of prisoners. Our government is right in its desire to adhere scrupulously to this convention. We may have little to fear if the German government should in retaliation try to indoctrinate American prisoners of war, but any departure from the terms of the convention might be used by the Germans as an excuse for disregarding it at some more vital point. However, even though this reason for the government's policy must be respected, we raise the question whether there are not things that are permissible under the Geneva Convention which we are now neglecting.

In the first place, would it not be wiser to segregate the fanatical Nazis rather than the anti-Nazis from the mass of prisoners? This would prevent the majority from being terrorized and in fact from being subjected to Nazi propaganda under American auspices. It would also make it possible for the Germans who believe in democracy to act as leaven among their fellow prisoners. Perhaps the extreme Nazis cannot be changed by any kind of teaching but it would be an enormous gain for the sanity of Germany and for peace if the majority whose minds are open can come to see through the lies of National Socialism and to have some grasp upon democratic ideals.

In the second place, would it not be possible, without any compulsory indoctrination, without any high pressure propaganda to encourage the majority of the prisoners to learn the facts about the democratic world and about the events of the last decade as seen from outside Germany, to learn the meaning of democracy? This would include information about America but it would in no sense be nationalistic teaching. Most of this teaching would be done by Germans themselves and all of it at their request.

This is the time for the re-education of these

people to begin. The fact that many of them have been surprised by the good treatment they have received should make them receptive. They have reason to be disillusioned about Nazi doctrines. They have the time. They are here. There is a committee of American writers and educators, including Dr. George H. Shuster, Dr. Monroe E. Deutsch, Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, Miss Dorothy Thompson, which is prepared to take advantage of any opportunity provided by the government to aid those German prisoners who desire to participate in such a process of education.

While there is no doubt that the Geneva Convention has been an essential factor in the cautious attitude of the government, it is difficult not to believe that our failure here can be understood in part as another example of the tendency of democracy to go by default in the presence of more aggressive and fanatical faiths. It is not unrelated to the intellectual vacuum which is too generally permitted in our own army. There is a reticence about the positive content of the democratic philosophy of life which grows out of inner uncertainty and out of the radical threat to established interests which is implicit in democracy. When this threat is made explicit, democracy becomes controversial even among its friends and silence concerning its objectives is in the line of least resistance. If we cannot overcome this obstacle in the case of prisoners of war in our own camps, we cannot expect to help the people in the fascist countries to find their way to a democratic faith.

J.C.B.

Editorial Notes

We publish in this issue an article by General Osborn which gives a very comprehensive survey of the expansion of educational work in the army, for which incidentally General Osborn is primarily responsible. His leadership in this field and his wholehearted devotion to the cultural task in the army is widely acknowledged and respected.

It ought to be pointed out that through no fault of the General's, our army still lags behind the British Army in dealing with immediate political and social issues. The chief cause for this is that the zone of agreement on political issues is less than in Britain. For this reason the army finds difficulty in placing topics of current interest in its curriculum, fearing that to do so would subject it to the charge that it is allowing "New Deal" propaganda in the armed services.

An amendment to the soldiers' vote bill, sponsored by Senator Taft, has had particularly dire re-

sults on the educational program in the army. The prohibition in the act is so strict that the army can hardly dare to facilitate any information about political or social issues in this country beyond the official handouts of the two major political parties. This forces our soldiers to fight for democracy while democracy is emptied of its meaning.

A corporal in Normandy has written his mother: "Last Sunday the Roman Catholics went to church and the Protestants worked, because, in the lieutenant's opinion, 'we don't care so much about it.'"

This is not an isolated instance, to judge from our correspondence, and is particularly due to the fact that the Catholic chaplains have the authority of their church behind them to a larger degree than do the Protestant chaplains. Here is a matter that ought to be taken up with the army by our Protestant leaders.

A report is current that a million civilians have been killed in Germany by our air raids. While the figure seems fantastic, it is not incredible. If some of the great cities of Germany have been virtually razed, as seems likely, there is no reason to doubt that the loss of life is beyond anything previously suggested. Such a loss of life will remind us of the tragic proportions of this war and will discount all roseate views of the future. The whole of Europe, including Germany and the countries which we are wresting from Germany in bitter conflict, will be a shambles. However relentless our will to victory, we would do well to remember how much evil we must do in order to accomplish our good: the defeat of tyranny. From such considerations we must derive a sense of pity and mercy, transcending the battle-lines.

The disintegration of Nazi authority was bound to come through friction between the party and the army. Recent developments in Germany suggest that the process of this disintegration has begun. The defeat of the Germany Army would still require many bitter months of fighting. But it now appears that the collapse of the German home front is not too far off. The end of the European war before the end of the year is now a distinct possibility. Peace may overtake us as quickly as the war did. The pacifists who do not want to prepare for war in time of peace and the militarists who do not want to prepare for peace in time of war are both refuted by the quick changes of fortune in history.

The Soldier Gets His Bearings

MAJOR GENERAL F. H. OSBORN

"**O**RIENTATION" is what they call it in the army. If you have a soldier son you may have seen the word in his letters. . . "I've got an orientation hour now, so I'll have to say so long 'till tomorrow."

Orientation is a part of his training. Literally, it means to "get his bearings." To know where he stands, and why, and what part he himself is playing in this new world of military life.

The goal of army orientation is to help each soldier plant his feet on a firm basis of fact and truth. For that he needs a clean-cut understanding of the background and causes of the war, a knowledge of why he fights. He should have, too, a clear, unclouded picture of the progress of the war, not only in his own theater, but in every part of the world. And above all, he needs to have faith in the American way of life and a strongly rooted belief in the future of his country.

Modern warfare has made more complex the psychological factor which weighs so heavily in successful contact with the enemy. Formerly, armies fought in comparatively close order, and it was easier to maintain in combat the steadying forces of discipline, precision of action and personal leadership. Now, however, we fight in small groups and often as individuals. Dispersion, cover and concealment are more the order of the day.

A man alone, pinned down in a foxhole under a curtain of enemy fire and unable to see or speak with his squad mates, needs more than good equipment and physical courage. He needs to believe in something bigger than himself. He needs to be able to answer the dark question in the back of his mind: "What am I doing here?"

And it is not only battle that tests the soldier. Troops in an inactive theater, a long way from home, are apt to develop, perhaps to an even greater degree than men in training or combat, attitudes of confusion and futility which need correction through orientation. Even at the front there are long periods when men are not actually in combat, and it is during those anxious waiting hours that the mental attitude of the soldier must be sustained to carry him again into battle.

How does the enlisted man in the U. S. Army get this vital part of his training? If you could drop in some evening at a big replacement training center, such as Camp Lee, you would see one of its phases. A crowd of 1200 men sits in a darkened auditorium. They are new soldiers, some of them less than a month in uniform.

Across the stage stretches a huge map, equipped with controlled lighting, so that specific areas can be

blacked out or thrown into brilliant relief in an instant. On either side are motion picture screens with films of combat action flashing on and off. And in the center of the stage three soldiers sit at microphones.

Their description of Japan's campaign of conquest in the Pacific gains weight and emphasis as one voice after another takes up the narrative and passes it on. With the play of lights on the great map, you literally see the unfolding of the enemy's ruthless plan, and his swift advance from island to island.

There are seventeen of these hours in the so-called basic orientation course, given to men undergoing their first four months of army training. They cover the rise of Japanese and German militarism, the steps that preceded the invasion of Poland and the attack on Pearl Harbor; the campaign of our Allies, and, finally, the participation of the United States. Not all the lectures are as well presented as those at Lee. But since January 1941, as many of our inductees as possible have been given this basic course. In the winter of 1942 some of the lectures began to be replaced by feature-length films, the so-called "Why We Fight" series, beginning with "Prelude to War" and running through "Divide and Conquer," "The Nazis Strike," "The Battle of Britain," "The Battle of Russia," "The Battle of China," and, finally, "America Goes to War." All but the last are finished. They have been shown generally to the personnel of the army, to the men of the navy and marines.

With this basic background of the causes and origins of the war given him in his first three months of training, the soldier goes to his first assignment as part of an operating army unit. His company commander, his platoon leader, his top sergeant, give him his direction. Outside influences would weaken their leadership. The Orientation Course is continued, but his own officers are responsible for it. It becomes a function of command.

For eight months in 1942 orientation was mandatory. Then for a year it was left to the discretion of the local command. By fall of 1943 it had demonstrated its influence in the field, and was again made mandatory. Orientation officers were assigned to all units down to regiments to assist company officers in the preparation of their talks. Excellent schools for orientation officers were set up in this country and in the major overseas theaters. The "current phase" really began to get rolling. During 1943, perhaps not more than 10 per cent of company officers were having really effective discussions with their men. Today we believe the percentage has gone up to the point where in many areas the work

effectively reaches 50 per cent or more of the men.

The work has been found most effective when the hour is conducted by company officers who are the men's natural leaders. Indeed, one object of the course is to strengthen the bond between the enlisted man and the junior officer. The type of session varies with the place and facilities available. As a rule, the soldier reports at a designated place, such as the company day room, with a group numbering anywhere from fifty to a hundred and twenty men. A company officer leads the discussion. He may start it off by setting up a large-scale map and giving a summary of the latest war news from the various fronts. Then he goes on with the discussion of some particular problem, based on materials prepared in the War Department or in his command. Or he may put a record on the radio-phonograph and say a few words before he plays it.

"Did any of you men ever wonder whether we had any real quarrel with the Nazis? Well, you're going to get an answer right from Hitler himself. This record was transcribed from some of his speeches on the German radio. The translation that goes along with his talk is strictly accurate. If anything, it's toned down, because it doesn't try to express the hatred in that screaming voice of his. You'll hear him say exactly what he thinks of Americans as fighters and what he plans to do with us when we're part of his Nazi-ruled world. He isn't trying to be funny. He's serious, and we'd better be serious about it, too."

The men like these sessions and ask for more of them. The outlet provided by free discussion often changes men's views more effectively than would any direction from above. An air force officer in the Southwest Pacific was recently disturbed by the attitude of his men who were talking constantly about going home. After the discussion of the news in the orientation hour, he turned to the subject which was closest to their hearts. The first men who spoke all said it was their turn to go home. They had been there 18 months and there were plenty of men in the States who had done no fighting. The ships were going back empty, why couldn't they go back in them now? The whole group took it up. They seemed to be agreed. A gunner from a bomber crew started the change. He said, "Sure, the ships going home are empty, there's plenty of room to go home. But how about the ships coming over? They are sleeping three deep in the holds already. Where would they get the men to take our places if we left? We ain't going to quit and let the Japs take over." Another man got up; those were his views too. The discussion ran well over the hour. When it was over, they were all agreed: they were going to stick it out and finish up the job.

At the disposal of the officer in charge of the com-

pany orientation are many types of materials, such as booklets on Allied and enemy countries, maps, posters, records or transcriptions, suggestions for quiz programs, and various kinds of films.

In the European theater, General Eisenhower gets out an excellent weekly pamphlet, *Army Talks*, which is issued to all company officers for use in the weekly orientation meetings. During the winter of training, such titles as "The Yank in Britain," "Lend Lease, Weapon for Victory," and "The Nature of a Free Man." As the invasion date drew nearer, "These Guys Fought 'Em," "Mein Kampf," "How Russians Kill Germans," and, finally, a few days before they crossed the Channel, "Achtung!! atten'SHUN TO YOU!" In the Southwest Pacific, General MacArthur issues a weekly pamphlet, *Map-talk*, with the current news of the war and its implications, which is flown out to his company officers, together with his own excellent newsmag. These orientation materials, whether gotten out here or abroad, have this in common: they contain no economic, political or social theorizing. Such material has no place in military training time. Discussion of such questions in off-duty time is another matter.

In all history there has never been an army to compare with ours in the educational level of its soldiers. Two-thirds of all our troops have been to high school and more than one-eighth have attended college. Physically, they are well trained, splendidly equipped. But to make them unbeatable they must have one more thing: a certain psychological strength that springs from confidence in their leadership, confidence in themselves and an impelling belief in the rightness of their mission.

Such inner strength does not miraculously descend on the soldier when he reaches a combat area. It must be the result of a progressive process of intelligent leadership and orientation which starts in his earliest training and continues ceaselessly through all phases of his life in the army.

We have described the army orientation course, the formal contact of officers and men on the larger issues.

We shall now touch more briefly on the other means by which, in off-duty time, the soldier is informed, and on the voluntary off-duty discussion groups in which a broader field is covered.

When the soldier first left the shores of the United States, he lost contact with his usual sources of information. His daily home paper was unavailable, or, if it reached him, was weeks or months late. There was no American radio on the air, only BBC or Berlin or Tokyo. In the early months of the war, these were the only sources of current news to the soldier. They were not satisfactory. The soldier wanted to know what was going on from home sources, and said so in no uncertain terms.

Now there is an Army News Service, sending out to all overseas headquarters two daily news bulletins of 1000 or 1500 words apiece, by radio and by wire. These are mimeographed for troops, posted up on bulletin boards, in mess halls, and company headquarters, or even sent forward to troops with their rations. There are army radio stations, over 100 in all, in the islands of the Pacific, in Africa, Italy, Sicily, New Delhi, Teheran and the Aleutians, in England and on the invasion coast, with news of the world and of the war and the best entertainment from America's top stars. And there are army newspapers. *Yank*, the army weekly, is printed in 14 different places over the world simultaneously and sells over 1,300,000 copies each week to the men of the army and navy. It is supplemented by local army papers in all larger areas. The *Stars and Stripes* in London sells over 530,000 copies daily to soldiers and sailors. There are *Stars and Stripes* dailies published in Africa and Italy. In India and China, the *C.B.I. Roundup*, in Alaska, *The Kodiak Bear*, to mention only a few. They are serviced by the Army News Service from the wires of AP, UP and INS. From *Yank* down, each publishes news from home, news of the war, and is a stimulus to broader thinking. Thus, the means for self orientation are in the hands of the most isolated men.

Finally, there are off-duty discussion groups wherever a few men congregate. These range from the smallest "bull session" to the most elaborate forum staged in advance, usually by the orientation officer, and largely attended. These groups are voluntary. Any subject can be discussed. The American Historical Society has prepared, in collaboration with the Education Branch of the Morale Services Division, a series of off-duty discussion pamphlets for distribution through orientation officers, to stimulate and direct the program. These pamphlets are in five major fields: General Subjects, International Problems, National Problems, Personal Problems, Foreign Nations.

The first six pamphlets are now coming off the press, and some thirty more are in process. They should stimulate the further development of discussion groups. The orientation officers recently graduating from the school at Washington and Lee are particularly trained to develop this work.

How does the orientation of the American soldier compare with what is done in other armies? The Germans have an immense organization within their army for the purpose of Nazi indoctrination. The Russians have officers for a similar purpose in all units down to regiments. We can hardly compare this type of indoctrination to what we are doing. Comparison with the British is more reasonable, for their purpose, like ours, is to present facts and broaden the scope of the soldier's thinking.

The British have a large number of full-time education officers working on all of the larger staffs in the British Army in England. These officers prepare the material, themselves conduct lectures and forums, and also take part in training the junior officers on how to handle their talks with their men. The English orientation hour is very similar to ours in that it is one hour a week in training time, conducted by company officers, and based on a weekly pamphlet prepared in London by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. The pamphlets are called, on alternate weeks, "The War," and "Current Affairs."

The major difference between the orientation hour in the American Army and the corresponding hour with British troops in England is that the British bi-weekly pamphlet "Current Affairs" occasionally goes beyond current affairs directly related to the war and involves discussion of broader political subjects. Extreme cases were the Current Affairs pamphlets on "Woman's Place" and on the Beveridge Plan. There is considerable discussion among the British as to the propriety of requiring discussion in training time, when men are preparing for combat, of subjects distinctly in the political field. It is possible perhaps under the British political system, where the government stays in power only so long as it controls a majority in Parliament. There are evident dangers in introducing political subjects as required material in military training time. There are some who advocate it in this country, but the American Army has been brought up in a different and, I believe, a far wiser tradition, and feels strongly that any discussion led by officers, or in training time, should be solely on subjects directly related to the effective conduct of the war.

The British have supplemented their orientation hour with an extensive educational program, conducted for several hours a week during the long winter months. Included in this program are a series of pamphlets under the general title "British Way and Purpose." This covers a far broader scope, including formal education materials. The difference between the two programs is best indicated by the titles of some of the recent issues. In the *Current Affairs* pamphlet (corresponding to our Orientation Course) recent titles have been as follows: "The Nazis in Scandinavia," "How About Japan?" "Armies of Occupation," "You and the Americans."

In the "British Way and Purpose" series, typical titles are: "People at Work," "The Health of the Citizen," "Government by the People," "The Home of the Citizen," "The Responsibility of the Citizen," "The Education of the Citizen," "You and the Colonies."

We do not have any course in training time parallel to this of the British. The American Army's off-duty discussion materials, prepared by the American

Historical Society and referred to earlier, cover a somewhat similar field. They are a part of our army's off-duty educational program, conducted through the Armed Forces Institute at Madison, Wisconsin, with branches in all of the major theaters of operation, providing correspondence courses to soldiers and sailors all over the world at the rate of 30,000 new enrollees each month, and providing off-duty study materials in quantities which stagger the imagination. But that is a whole story in itself, and hardly appropriate to a brief article on orientation.

The British have had troops in training in their small Island for over four years. It is possible in England to distribute material rapidly from a central headquarters because of the short distances involved. They have had time to train a large number of their officers in the proper handling of discussion. With the British there has been so long a period of training that it was desirable to introduce as diverse matters as possible in order to keep up the men's interest. These conditions are very different from those in the United States, where it has been necessary to train a vast new army with the utmost rapidity in a great variety of technical subjects in order to send them rapidly overseas, competently equipped with knowledge of their trade as soldiers. It is therefore natural that in the British Isles themselves there has been more progress in the development of this work than there has been until recently in the United States.

Wherever the British have been working under conditions similar to those existing with most of our troops, namely, in a foreign country, a long distance from home, and under intensive training or combat, the education and information services have been somewhat less than those in our own army. There is one further condition to be taken into account, namely, that the average Britisher, while he has had less formal education than the average American, is far more internationally-minded. Gibraltar, Suez, Singapore and Hong Kong are household names to every Englishman. Compared to this broad consciousness of their dependence on international trade, the attitude of the average American is singularly insular. This difference in initial attitudes is one not easily overcome by the simple transition from civilian to army life.

When we take into account the difficulties of these problems in the American Army and consider the broad informational program carried out by our army newspapers, army news service, and global radio operations for our troops, and the broad educational program of the Armed Forces Institute, the comparison with the British, or any other army, is far from unfavorable. Americans have every reason to be proud of the imagination and effort displayed by our army in this important field.

Denominational Pronouncements On the War

F. ERNEST JOHNSON

Within the past three months the supreme law-making bodies of four large denominations have made pronouncements on the war which invite close scrutiny. The Northern Baptist, Congregational Christian, Methodist and Presbyterian (U.S.A.) communions have contributed notably to the pacifist leadership that has been so conspicuously influential in Protestantism during the interval between the two great wars. Their current pronouncements are therefore of much significance.

Methodist

This is particularly true of the Methodist Church whose General Conference met at Kansas City in April for the first time since Pearl Harbor. In 1940 that body adopted a "Statement on War and Peace" which included the following sentences taken from the report of the Oxford Conference:

... War involves compulsory enmity, diabolical outrage against human personality, and a wanton distortion of the truth. War is a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world, and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. No justification of war must be allowed to conceal or minimize this fact.

Having endorsed this judgment upon war the statement declared that in consequence

... The Methodist Church, although making no attempt to bind the consciences of its individual members, will not officially endorse, support, or participate in war. We insist that the agencies of the Church shall not be used in preparation for war, but in the promulgation of peace.

The crucial question before the General Conference this year was whether this pronouncement should be reaffirmed or modified. The Committee on the State of the Church offered majority and minority reports. The former recommended reaffirmation of the relevant portions of the 1940 statement with the addition of a paragraph wholly consistent with it. To this the minority report was in sharp contrast. It insisted that the crux of the matter was this: "Must the Christian Church condemn all use of military force?" Thus the issue of pacifism was directly raised—an issue upon which in 1940 the General Conference had refrained from taking a stand. In the 1940 statement the crucial point was the declaration that the Church itself, its agencies and instrumentalities should have no part in war. But this year the Conference was in a very different mood. It substituted the minority for the majority report, pointing out that over a million young men from Methodist homes have gone into the services and declaring:

... God himself has a stake in the struggle and he will uphold them as they fight forces destructive of the moral life of man. In Christ's name we ask for the blessing of God upon the men in the armed forces and we pray for victory. We repudiate the theory

that a state, even though imperfect in itself, must not fight against intolerable wrongs. . . .

. . . We are well within the Christian position when we assert the necessity of the use of military forces to resist an aggression which would overthrow every right which is held sacred by civilized men.

The vote was by "orders"—lay and ministerial. The stage had been set for it by the Episcopal address which, referring to the sacrifices of American youth in the war, said:

We pray for the protection of their lives, the maintenance of their Christian ideals, a speedy and victorious end to this cruel war and their early return to our homes and churches.

This was not a new note to come from the Council of Bishops, which had on more than one occasion since the war began issued statements giving vigorous moral support to the struggle against the Axis. Yet the vote was indecisive, for while the lay delegates favored the minority report by 203 to 131, the ministerial vote was 170 to 169—with one ballot defective and one delegate abstaining.

But the matter was not finished. It was pointed out that the new statement made necessary a revision of Section 15 of the Methodist "Social Creed," which contained in substance the same inhibition already voted down: "The Methodist Church as an institution cannot endorse war nor support or participate in it." While the inconsistency was too patent to ignore, the Conference was now in no mood to abate in any particular its long-standing judgment upon war as a negation of Christianity. A reaction had apparently set in. The paragraph adopted to replace Section 15 of the Creed is a sweeping denunciation of war. It reads in part:

. . . The methods of Jesus and the methods of war belong to different worlds. War is a crude and primitive force. It arouses passions which in the beginning may be unselfish and generous, but in the end war betrays those who trust in it. It offers no security that its decisions will be just and righteous. It leaves arrogance in the heart of the victors and resentment in the heart of the vanquished.

While the 1940 statement and the Oxford Conference pronouncement which it ratified left the way open for forcible opposition to aggressive war, it is difficult to reconcile the above statement with sanction by the Church of any participation whatever in war. And it was precisely on the question of the relation of the Church, as Church, to the waging of war that the Conference—by the slenderest margin—reversed itself.

Baptist

The Northern Baptist Convention faced a somewhat similar crisis at Atlantic City. The Convention was apparently set to leave the war issue with a simple reaffirmation of former pronouncements which did not involve a "showdown" on the pacifist issue. Indeed, it actually did reaffirm "our position on war taken through the years. But what a committee minority accomplished at the Methodist General Conference, Dr. Daniel A. Poling did with a personal resolution at the Baptist meeting. Like the

Kansas City statement it declared that "God has a stake in this war." It called for a church "militant as an army with banners." It was over-whelmingly adopted. But at Atlantic City, too, there were second thoughts and on reflection, and after sleep, the Convention trimmed the resolution at those two points. In substance, however, the statement was allowed to stand. It is manifestly the result of an effort to recognize the moral issue with which the war confronts the Church while at the same time preserving essential continuity of testimony. "War itself," says the resolution, "is not and cannot be made holy. The present is of all wars the most bestial. But while war itself is unholy, liberty and justice, brotherhood and human personality are most holy. For the overwhelming majority of all those who seek to know the mind of Christ, and to obey his will, when war is invoked against these holy things there is no alternative but to dedicate in their defense our lives, our treasure and that which to us is dearer than physical existence—the lives of our children." Prayer for "mere triumph" is disavowed, but the resolution continues:

. . . We do pray that our sons shall be adequate for their high hour, and that 'with malice toward none and charity for all' we with them shall bring even that 'last full measure' to win the war and to achieve Christian ideals in the peace time relations of the peoples of the earth. We will not bless war, but we will not withhold our blessing from our sons who fight and from our country's cause in which they with the sons of the Allied Nations now engage.

That is the way the Baptists met the situation. Interpretation is hazardous, but it seems fair to say that without being very explicit about it the Convention distinguished between war as such—in terms of the Pact of Paris, war "as an instrument of national policy," deliberately invoked in the first instance—and warfare in resistance to aggression. War as an institution it would not bless, but participation in defensive war it did bless. Probably few would deny that despite the effort to preserve consistency the net result was a revision of the denomination's earlier testimony concerning war.

Presbyterian

When we turn to the record of the Presbyterian General Assembly at Chicago an impressive contrast appears. The question at issue was dealt with in a short paragraph of a resolution presented by Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, which reads as follows:

. . . We humble ourselves before God for our sins as a nation which have contributed to this conflict, especially for our neglect of responsibility for justice and security in the world. We thank Him for moving us to repentance, even by the terrible scourge of war, and for constraining us to share in resisting cruel and conscienceless aggressors. We do not presume to identify our purposes nor those of any people with the holy will of Him whose thoughts are far above the thoughts of man; but we are of good conscience that our cause is in line with His righteousness, and that we can commend the issue to His hands.

This is forthright enough. It is God who impels us to war against aggression, and though we fall short of his holi-

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ness we confidently assume that He sanctions our cause. A motion to delete the crucial portions was defeated and the resolution was adopted by decisive vote. There is no talk here of a "holy war," but does any one believe that God "constrains" man to what is unholy? There is nothing about "blessing war" yet the Church commends "our cause" in making war into his hands whose righteousness sanctions it.

Congregational

Turning finally to the meeting of the Congregational Christian General Council, we find the pronouncement formulated at Grand Rapids strikingly different. The Council had previously had its fling at controversy on the war issue, had taken serious note of its internal divisions, and seems to have had no great concern to put the denomination on record with reference to the war. Its preoccupation was with the world after hostilities ceased. "We continue," the Council said in a statement concerning the war, "to recognize and cherish within our fellowship the divergent positions with respect to the war which have a common basis in Christian faith. A majority of us believe that in the present situation armed aggression must be met by armed force before a just peace may become possible. A minority of us,

convinced of the futility and wrongness of the war-method, renounce the use of military force, and give support only to the agencies of reconciliation. Together we work for the new world that is in Jesus Christ." In the longer, carefully prepared statement on "The Churches and the Post-War World" the war is declared to be "a struggle between a civilization influenced by traditional Christian principles, and a fascist paganism which deifies the State."

Reflections

Can any significant inferences be drawn from this record? It is easy to be cynical about it, and attribute the irreconcilability of successive pronouncements to hypocrisy or cowardice. It is easy to be supercilious about it. One widely known Methodist pastor declared in his pulpit that the General Conference had "made an ass of itself—by one vote." Such judgments seem to this writer to be not very profound. Nor is there any virtue in gloating over the fact that what was regarded as an unrealistic pacifism is being liquidated. Perhaps such reflections as the following are more in order and more salutary:

1. Is it not to the credit of a group of Christians that it can only with great reluctance subtract anything from its testimony against war, even though a rugged and realistic ethics may dictate such a course?

2. Could not much of this struggle and pain have been avoided if the many church pronouncements on war, including that of the Oxford Conference, had made frankly explicit what was all but invariably implicit, namely, that the object of condemnation was *war in the first instance*, not resistance to aggression? Efforts to limit denunciation to aggressive war were cried down because "aggressive" was held to be a weasel word. Weasel or not, a careful reading of the church pronouncements shows that they could not have been directed at all participation in war, for that would have meant that the churches were extending full fellowship to men who were deliberately making devils of themselves. Yet there was just enough ambiguity in the pronouncements to permit of their being interpreted—and clung to—as pacifist testimony.

3. Are we who are non-pacifists very sure that the putting of the Church officially and corporately into the war as a sort of moral belligerent is a step forward? What does it imply as to the validity of the testimony of the Church as an ecumenical body that it can discern the will of God as requiring that the nation stay out of a war and within four years can assure itself that God sanctions whole-hearted participation? It seems to the writer that there is something wrong with this picture. When is the Church not the ecumenical Church?

We should like to remind our readers that the next two issues of CHRISTIANITY AND CRISIS will be suspended. The next issue appears on September 18th.

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